

Impact of COVID 19 on Migration Migrants,
Refugees, and IDPs:

Regional Dialog Workshop Hosted by
Organization for Social Science Research in
Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)

March 27, 2023

Conference Proceeding

1. Introduction

This is a report about the Regional Dialog Workshop on the Impact of COVID 19 on Migration Migrants, Refugees and IDP. The workshop/webinar was hosted by the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) and it was held on the 27th March, 2023. The workshop, which involved several participants from different Eastern and Southern African countries (including two migration scholars from the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Maseno) was conducted in three sessions. The report below is a summary of the five presentations of research findings, discussions and comments, questions and queries as well as responses given by researchers/presenters in the sessions of the webinar

2. Session One : Welcoming Remarks

The meeting commenced with introductory remarks and housekeeping rules made by Mr. Alemu Tesfaye, the Regional Director of OSSREA,. That was followed by Dr. Truphena Mukuna's (the Executive Director of OSSREA) welcoming speech. After warmly welcoming participants to the regional dialog workshop, Dr. Mukuna thanked presenters for sharing their research findings regarding the impact of COVID 19 on migration related issues in the webinar. Dr. Mukuna also expressed her gratitude to the African Academy for Migration Research for sponsoring this study as research partner and donor. And she noted that the significance of such kind of support for promoting scholarship in Africa cannot be overstated.

3. Session Two: Paper Presentations

3.1.Dr. Nuwamanya's presentation titled , "Facing the COVID-19 Pandemic in Displacement: The Experiences of the Batuku Pastoralists at the Uganda-Democratic Republic of Congo border Area."

Dr Nuwamanya started his presentation by giving some background information about Batuku cross-border pastoralists. Like any other border people, Dr Nuwamanya noted, the Batuku cross-border pastoralists have not been passive spectators in relation to the border dynamics at the Uganda-DRC border; they have typically constituted their own "cross-border societies" that do not emphasise national citizenship. They also produce their own context rooted in their social practices, the researcher added, that transcend nation-state boundaries. It is this spatially constructed "border cultural context" of the Batuku pastoralists, Dr Nuwamanya further explained, that have been challenged by the militias, and their struggles for territorial control, and political and military hegemony in DRC. Dr. Nuwamanya also

tried to show that some of the cross-border pastoralists lost some their sources of income (i.e. livestock) as a result of the above antagonisms and eventually started to live in internally displaced camps in Uganda before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, despite their continued resilience to withstand several problems.

In the presentation, it was learnt that Dr Nuwamanya was informed by border theory perspectives while examining the extent to which COVID-19 pandemic and the programmes and activities have contained, and its spread affected the borders as contested spaces that shaped aspects of social reality. And his study revealed that the Batuku cross-border pastoralists have constructed an identity that is embedded in and informed by their spatial context (the border cultural context). Furthermore, he argues that the Batuku pastoralists have constructed a “border cultural context” through maintaining ties with their kin groups across the border, creating routes that are not known to border officials, and developing networks and institutions based on cattle exchanges to facilitate their movements and access to resources and services as they secured their livelihood. It is this “border cultural context” as a source of their resilience to the spatial conditions of drought and other ecological uncertainties and vulnerabilities, the researcher further argued, that was found to have been greatly challenged by COVID-19 Pandemic and national health emergency supply chain systems and programmes to stop and contain its spread. For instance, public services, including schools, hospitals, markets, and facilities for animal vaccination were set up for citizens who move from place to place only infrequently.

Looking at what cross-border pastoralists experienced, as their mobile lifestyle requires negotiating access to government resources, support, and services on either side of the border and how COVID-19 affected this kind of lifestyle. This contributes to pastoralists-border studies literature by investigating the experiences of Batuku pastoralists, how COVID-19 pandemic lockdown programmes and activities have affected their livelihoods. For Dr Nuwamanya, this is because borders, as pointed out by Goodhead (2008), delineate different forms of sovereignty, citizenships and regulatory regimes and always transient and fluid they are continually negotiated and contested. And this perspective indicates that borders are not the product of geography. Highlighted through this perspective is also the reality that whether borders are arbitrary or intra-ethnically or politically divisive, they are often an accepted and reproduced that are rooted in social and economic life of borderland communities.

One major finding that stood out from Dr Nuwamanya's study is that borders hold meanings for people who live in them and such meanings are contested by other social formations. Related with this, the researcher argues, is what Migdal (2014) calls "mental maps," which incorporate elements of the meanings people attach to special configurations, the loyalties they hold, the emotions, and passions that groups evoke, and their cognitive ideas about how the world is constructed. This also establishes and maintains a "culture context" that connects people and their practices at the border and in so doing they also mark the separation between groupings.

Through this special logic, Dr Nuwamanya explained, cross-border pastoralists at the Uganda-DRC border have produced a territorial dimension that is composed of code words, secret names, signals, established routes of travel, and sanctions for divergent behaviour. "Border people are not spectators in the border dynamics," the presenter notes, "they typically constitute their own cross-border society that does not emphasise citizenship". In other words, border subjects produce their own context, rooted in social practice that transcends nation-state boundaries.

Another finding highlighted in the presentation is that even though African borders have particular salience characterized by "mixed inefficiency" and "inconsistent enforcement", for once in the history of these borders, the African states became strong at most border points in Africa due to COVID-19 pandemic. That was because of the sweeping changes to people's lives, social interactions, government functioning, and global relations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the experiences of the border dwellers, the researcher noted, is not an exception. In fact, the dwellers' situation was exacerbated, Dr Nuwamanya added, by the draught at the Uganda-DRC that deprived the Batuku of the livestock and the insecurity in DRC which restricted the Batuku's migrations across the border due to militias' abducting any pastoralists that crossed the border. Furthermore, the government of Uganda has put those pastoralists whose livestock were depleted by the draught into protection camps for easy provision of the basic needs. The COVID-19 pandemic came at this point in time, Dr Nuwamanya remarked, and this added more restrictions on their movements hence confining them in camps.

That the loss of livestock among the Batuku means loss of self-esteem, ritual direction and purpose is another finding reported in the presentation. Social relations became senseless, Dr Nuwamanya added, because they were based on livestock exchanges. It was further learnt

that the social positioning of individuals among the Batuku society is anchor in cattle ownership; personhood is misguided when livestock begin depleting because the meaning of a person among the Batuku relates to possession of cattle.

In his concluding remarks, Dr Nuwamanya noted that the resilience the Batuku had enjoyed through their border cultural context has been weakened due to militia activities of abductions, insecurity, and restrictions that came with the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also recommended that the States must come to the table and maintain peace in the Great Lakes region. Regional states, he added, must also create corridors where border people irrespective of citizenship could access public goods and services. Finally, he underlined the need to devise policies rooted in cultural frameworks of the persons targeted.

3.2. Dr. Tirsit Sahiledingle's presentation entitled, "*Refugee Strategies to cope with the Corona virus Pandemic: Case Studies in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.*"

By way of giving the study context, Dr. Tirsit explained that Addis Ababa is home to an estimated 31,000 refugees, of whom about 20,000 that are registered and another 11,000 are unregistered. Explaining further that unregistered refugees have no access to health care, education and legal services, Dr Tirsit noted that the number of unregistered refugees, especially those from Eritrea, are estimated to be more than three times the total number of urban registered refugees. As a result, she added, they suffer from the economic and social predicaments of the pandemic because of a lack of systematic response mechanisms for unregistered refugees.

From her presentation, it was further learnt that the difficulty refugees faced became complicated because even before the corona virus pandemic, many refugees in Addis Ababa lived and worked in precarious conditions and were often unable to make a living. The livelihood of many refugees has also been completely lost due to the new approach to controlling the spread of the pandemic, which crashed the informal economic activities in which many unregistered refugees were engaged.

Dr. Tirsit explained that the refugees in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, who come from Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, and the Great Lakes regions were the focus of her study. More specifically, her emphasis was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic these refugees and the strategies they employed to sustain their livelihoods.

Dr Tirsit conducted her study employing qualitative research methodology. She gathered her data from twenty interviewees chosen among refugees from Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. In terms of age, the interviewees ranged from 20 to 50 years. The interviews were conducted in Addis Ababa between May and August 2020. From the 20 interviews, Dr Tirsit developed 8 case studies that illustrate the living conditions of refugees from camps and outside camps.

Regarding the impact of the pandemic on local economies, livelihood and security of refugees Dr Tirsit's study revealed that it was the informal economy, which take the majority share, that was severely affected by the shutdown. That was not surprising given that more than 77% of the economic activity in Addis Ababa is informal business, Dr Trisit argues. Examples of the major informal sectors refugees were engaged in before the pandemic includes: petty trade, waitressing, and barbershops. Wedding planners from the Eritrean refugees and language teachers from Great Lakes refugees, in particular, lost their job following the outbreak of the pandemic, says Dr Trisit. Illustrative of this is the experience of one of her interviewee, a refugee who used to work as a hairdresser in a beauty salon earning 1,000 Ethiopian Birr a month on top of the daily tips from her clients. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, customers gradually decreased and as a result, things became difficult for her. The other activity that was hit hard because of the pandemic was doing laundry for clients in various housing complexes; since everyone had to stay at home doing their laundry the job dried up. Entertainment business also fell apart. The refugees particularly affected most by that were Eritreans, many of whom performed songs and dancing in marriage ceremony. Following the pandemic, these activities stopped as there were no more big ceremonies.

Another important trend captured by Dr Tirsit is the loss of remittance, which was the principal source of income for urban refugees. According to informants, says Dr Tirsit, remittances have stopped since the outbreak of the pandemic. The housing condition of refugees, where refugees had to live in small huts, was also reported to be precarious; because all family members had to stay at home due to the lockdown, the already small houses were overcrowded. For refugees living in condominium houses, the problem was less visible. It is refugees renting from landlords who lived closely with them that found life to be hard. One of Dr. Tirsit's informant said, "The owner of the house told me to reduce the number of our family, but it was really hard to push my cousins from my home because they come from Asmara to stay with me".

Reduced food base on the part of the refugees was another major finding reported in Dr. Tirsit's work. It is known that urban refugees, especially OCPs, says Dr. Tirsit, do not receive ration from UNHCR or from any other organizations. To make matters worse, she adds, the refugees lost their business and due to this they suffered a lot from shortage of food. In spite of that, Eritrean refugees expressed gratitude to their Ethiopian neighbors who used to share what they had with them. The refugees say they were particularly beneficiary of the "Sharing food" camping in which many volunteer people mobilized and distributed food items to the community including Eritrean refugees.

Dr Tirst's presentation has also highlighted the coping strategies the refuges employed to withstand the crises resulting from the pandemic. Major strategies used include, says the researcher, looking for Aid, sharing living space, changing dietary behaviors, and using religion as hope and support to pass the time of the pandemic.

Dr. Tirsit concluded her presentation by underlining that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the weakness of support systems for refugees, while underscoring the importance of ongoing work to address social inequalities among refugees in an already poor. Finally, refugees must be, Dr Tirsit recommended, part of the strategies and measures developed by governments against the pandemic.

3.3. Dr. Jerome Ntege's Presentation titled, "Covid-19 Induced Urban-Rural Migration and Environment Degradation in Uganda: The Ripple Effects of the Social –Economic Impact of Corona & the Youth Questio"

Introducing his topic, Dr Ntege noted that the first case of COVID-19 infection in Uganda was found on March 21, 2020 and 10 days later i.e. on 31st March, extreme measures, including a national lockdown, were taken by the Ministry of Health to prevent the spreading of the virus. By July 2020, Dr Ntege added, cases began to rise when Uganda registered its first death. However, efforts were taken by the government to reinforce the projected effects of the pandemic (MoFPED, 2020), and some sectors (e.g., health, media, education agriculture, security, statehouse, and local government) received additional funding.

Dr. Ntege pointed out that the drastic measures taken to curb Covid-19 created a great strain on the livelihoods of urban youth in Uganda. And the lockdown disrupted and severely affected the economic situation of the youth in Uganda, the researcher explained, affecting access to social services like health, food security, education, trade, peace and security, social

protection, and water and sanitation sectors and these were greatly disrupted in the urban centers. According to Dr. Ntege, it was also envisioned that the long-term effects of the crisis would include increased levels of youth unemployment and aggravation of their vulnerability. Keeping that in mind, the researcher added, the Government ratified policies to mitigate COVID-19 and help citizens, of whom the youth is a part, to build resilience for a better post-COVID-19.

In spite of that, Dr. Ntege decried, there was only little attention given to the impact of the pandemic on induced internal migration and the environment. Despite the fact that a number of studies discuss the impact of Covid-19 on the communities, especially on the security, maternal health, and well-being of people, the researcher argues, the ripple effects of the reported impacts are not systematized and disaggregated. Totally overlooked in the literature is, however, Dr. Ntege further argues, how the youth from the city has affected the rural communities when they migrated from the cities to escape the crises caused by the pandemic and the impact all this would have on the environment.

Dr. Ntege's study revealed that household-level economic impacts became worse in the urban centers as the lockdown extended and that led to induced urban-rural migration of the urban poor youth to the rural areas seeking food from their rural ancestral homes.

What wasn't anticipated was, Dr. Ntege noted, what would the urban youth do in the villages and how that could translate into impacting livelihoods, land pressure, and environmental degradation in rural communities.

In order to answer this and other related questions Dr Ntege reported that he adopted two distinct theoretical lenses: political economy theory and critical event theory. He used political economy to assess the impact of COVID-19 not only on individuals per se but as a manifestation of the key aspect of the political economy in Uganda. Understanding the impact of COVID-19 should consider, Dr Ntege elaborated, the structures and institutions that contributed to inequalities, lack of access to resources, and human suffering in a local context. To examine the patterns of COVID-19 closely, Dr Ntege added, is to ask about the political economy of the epidemic, which refers to investigating the effect of COVID-19 between urban-rural poor youth, the behavior of youth, and the power relationship that affects these factors.

The critical Event theory, the second theory that informed Dr. Ntege's study, dwells on a critical event that changes society. Explaining critical theory further, Dr Ntege noted that the terrains on which a critical event takes place crisscrosses several institutions moving across families, communities, the state, and multinational corporations. In light of that, Dr Ntege argues, COVID-19 can be considered a critical event that devastated the lives of the youth, destroyed and that distracted the communities. Yet, in the face of the crisis the youth didn't just give up; instead, they picked themselves up and tried to live again –some migrating to their ancestral communities. What shouldn't be neglected here is, Dr. Ntege cautions, to try to describe the people's experience during the outbreak but also the damages that urban youth migrants cause to rural host communities while fleeing to seek refuge during the lockdown.

In addition to explaining the theories that informed her study, Dr. Ntege also talked at length about her research settings and the research methods she employed. While the study was conducted in Kampala in Central, Masaka in Southern, and Gulu in northern Uganda at the end of 2021, the study was designed using a mixed methods approach (i.e., using both quantitative phenomenological approaches). Administering a survey questionnaire among randomly chosen 890 young people and conducting in-depth interviews with selected respondents in study area, the researcher gathered the necessary data for the study.

As part of the data, informants were asked to describe their lived experiences in detail and that was supported by field notes. These descriptions were analyzed to arrive at experiences relevant to the phenomenon of the pandemic from the youths' perspectives. The use of the phenomenology approach allowed us, says Dr. Ntege, to go back to the events of the pandemic outbreak to discover and lay bare what lies hidden in survivors' experiences to emerge and manifest in their descriptions enabling us to unravel the meaning of lived experiences during the outbreak.

One of the findings that stood out in Dr. Ntege's study was putting the impact of Covid-19 as push factors; that is, the lockdown disrupted and severely affected the socioeconomic situation in the country. Because Uganda had over 85% of people, mainly youth, employed in the informal sector already operating below the poverty line, Dr. Ntege explained, the youth in the urban centers mainly live in the slums characterized by extreme poverty, lack of quality services, and infrastructure. More specifically, the youth are mainly employed as casual laborers, hawkers, boda-boda riders, tailors, hairdressers, market stall operators, and food vendors, among others. However, as revealed from the findings of Dr. Ntege's study,

because of the lockdown, many young people have lost their sources of regular income creating financial instability, as many had little or no savings to resort. Because of that, not only did COVID-19 cause a public health emergency in Uganda but it also brought about unprecedented suffering to the urban youth.

Young people's flight to rural areas in search of food is another finding reported as a push factor forcing the youth to move from urban to rural areas. Some men had abandoned their families and ran away, says Dr Ntege, while others took their families to rural areas. For those who lived in urban areas but had money (via savings, ongoing employment/ business, etc.) food was available, sometimes plentifully. Food was, however, inadequate for most youth who depended on casualized earnings and/or remittances.

According to the study, the main safety nets against these people's food insecurity were: urban-to-rural people flows; food aid by the government; and charitable food aid by NGOs, faith-based organizations, and philanthropists. Urban dwellers who returned to rural areas created, the study further indicated, pressure on the food resources the area. That was because the food aid from the government failed to reach the people for whom it was intended; its distribution was fraught with discrimination, corruption, logistical inefficiencies, and politicization for political gain.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected the youths in epic proportion, it was learnt that the youth were determined to live using all the means (e.g., switching roles, locations, and livelihoods). For instance, the study revealed that in 2019 (i.e. at the outbreak of the pandemic) 636 of the respondents (72%) were involved in some economic activity from which they earned income. At the same time, it was also found out that a considerable number of the respondents stopped working for several reasons: 24% stopped working due to closure on account of government Covid-19 restrictions; 6%, for being laid off; 8%, due to inability to reach work due to travel restrictions; and 10%, because of other reasons. Overall, 91 percent of the respondents reported that their households' incomes were negatively affected by the pandemic.

As revealed by Dr. Ntege's study, the separation of families was a common phenomenon caused by the pandemic, and it happened in three main ways: 1) the man (usually the head of household) sent the wife and children to the village (because, under lockdown, sustaining them off-farm in urban/ semi-urban areas had become very difficult or impossible); 2) the man abandoned his wife and children; and 3) the family disintegrated upon eviction from

their domicile, typically due to non-payment of rental fees. In all the three instances, a disproportionately large duty of care (for children) was placed on mothers. In some instances, however, lockdown (and the inability of men to provide for their families) resulted in the switching of traditional gender roles, including a welcome increase in the involvement of men in the domestic sphere and vice-versa.

Related with the massive flight of the urban youth to rural areas is the negative impact it has on the environment. Illustrative of this is what a study participant remarked:

People had to change livelihoods overnight and even people who would otherwise not be involved in environmentally dangerous practices were forced to [do so] for survival. We have lost so many tree-covers, particularly in the sub-counties of Ndagwe and Malongo largely because communities resorted to charcoal burning. We have lost wetlands with people changing livelihoods to go into farming, brick making, and sand mining...” (Chief Administrative Officer, Lwengo District Local Government)

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Ntege acknowledged Uganda's success story of limiting the spread of Covid-19 and trying to adapt the WHO guidelines. At same time, he underlined the impact of the drastic measures, especially the lockdown, which increased the vulnerability of urban youth. The horrible situation in the urban centers, he noted, resulted in many young people choosing to switch back to the rural areas to get family support, especially food. In brief, the COVID-19 pandemic stretched the urban poor youth to extreme vulnerability to the limits and in their attempt to adapt and respond to the emerging situation, they affected the environment.

3.4. Birungi Brenda’s (a PhD student from Makerere University) presentation titled, “Irregular Cash Transfers and the Impact of COVID-19, Experiences among South Sudanese Urban Refugees in Kampala, Uganda”

Ms. Brenda started her presentation by defining urban refugee as, “a refugee who resides in an urban area instead of a refugee settlement or camp.” She then gave a general insight about Uganda urban refugees following the amendment of the refugee act in 2010, which provided refugees with the freedom of mobility and which considered urban areas to be refugee hosting spaces. By December 2020, Ms Brenda explained, a population of 86,730 refugees and asylum seekers were registered in Kampala, and of these 6,185 were South Sudanese.

The expectations of better standards of living, access to better education, medical care, and houses were some of the factors, argues the presenter, that pushed refugees to settle in the urban areas like Kampala.

As is the case elsewhere in which refugees find themselves competing with the urban poor and the status of 'refugee' blurring their access, the findings of Ms. Brenda's study is also consistent with that of earlier studies (e.g., AGORA, 2018) that reported urban refugees in Uganda were left with little or no humanitarian assistance. More specifically, Brenda's study indicated that urban refugees, therefore, survived on their own social networks and innovations. Even then, the study further revealed that COVID-19 increased the already existing challenges faced by urban refugees and introduced new forms of challenges and uncertainty.

Her study has also shed light on cash transfers (conditional and unconditional) which refer to payment of money to eligible persons. While conditional cash transfers refer to the payment of money to eligible persons with stipulated conditions of how the money should be used by the beneficiary, unconditional cash transfers denote payments where beneficiaries decide on how to use the money they receive.

The ripple effect of the COVID-19 pandemic was felt Globally, says, Ms Brenda, and the usage of cash transfers to render assistance to vulnerable persons increased. However, contrary to settlement-based refugees in Uganda, Brenda's study indicated that the urban refugees received irregular cash transfers during the pandemic since urban life is facilitated by the availability and access to cash for everyday living. Because COVID-19 disorganised everyday life everywhere, the study further revealed that cash streams like remittances from abroad were reduced and in general, access to cash was unguaranteed. Added to that, the Uganda South Sudan urban refugee community (USSURC), a refugee-based organisation formed to help urban South Sudanese was severely affected; it was unable to assist the urban refugees and it therefore lost their trust. During the pandemic, urban refugees explored all possible networks and they had to rely on family or friends in the settlements for food, soap, and basic requirements. And some urban refugees had to return to the settlements.

One reason gravitating the youth to rural areas, Brenda explains, is the focus of humanitarian aid and assistance on settlement-based refugees in rural areas at the expense of urban refugees. For instance, regular cash transfers as well as regular food rations were given to

settlement-based refugees,. And yet, urban refugees lacked cash for rent and cash for food and COVID-19 placed them in a more vulnerable condition than settlement-based refugees.

Breda's study also showed that irregular cash transfers are void of a routine or schedule making it difficult for the beneficiaries to plan for the money. Added to that, it was found that irregular cash transfers cause anxiety and unrest for the beneficiaries. To make matters worse, there was lack of clear channels of information about the distribution of cash transfers among urban refugees making them more anxious and vulnerable.

Concluding her presentation, Ms Brenda reiterated that the disruption caused by COVID-19 to the streams of income on which urban refugees mostly depend multiplied their vulnerability arguably worsening the already existing challenges faced by vulnerable populations. Although the cash transfers proved to be effective during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms Brenda added, much of the attention was directed towards settlement-based refugees leaving the urban refugees to rely on 'crumbs' of aid consisting of irregular and inconsistent cash transfers. And most affected by the irregularity of the cash transfers were the South Sudanese urban refugees in Kampala; as a result, they became discontent, increasingly uncertain, and vulnerable.

Based on her findings, she suggested that regular cash transfers are highly recommended for urban refugees especially for them to achieve sustainable self-reliance. The government of Uganda, she further recommended, should include refugees in its initiatives to cushion the effects of the pandemic.

3.5. Dr. Ruth Choge's presentation titled "Education amidst conflict and forced displacement: Whose agenda is it?"

Prior to dwelling on her study findings, Dr Choge noted that education is a basic right for all learners irrespective of ability, status or conditions that the learners find themselves in. School going children who have acquired refugee status, Dr Choge added, face a number of challenges including lack of harmonized curriculum, policy frameworks on commitment of planning; and she emphasized the need to manage these challenges by all stakeholders concerned for the benefit of the learners.

Dwelling more on the impact of armed conflicts, she noted that the daily lives of millions of children are being disturbed by acts of atrocity that will mark their future. What is at stake, in particular, Choge argues, is the fundamental right of children i.e. their education. Affected

in these circumstances are, she added, not only children but also all agents of education including the education team, students, family, infrastructure, the school environment, curriculum, and the strategies delivered by teachers. By way of giving background information, she reported that approximately 57 million children of primary school age did not attend school in the year 2011 and more than 13 million of those children are in the countries, and are directly or indirectly affected by armed conflicts. Today, Africa, Dr Choge added, has more displaced people than any other continent in the world; Africa continues to experience expanding and record levels of forced displacement because of predatory governments, political fragmentation, and violent extremist groups. The advent of COVID - 19 escalated the course and impact of conflicts.

Following that Dr. Choge underlined the need to identify problems in relation to refugees' education. . First, it is very important, she argued, to have the information about education amidst conflict and forced displacement because that can form a much needed basis on how to competently plan for quality education of such learners in conflict zone and refugee camps. It is also worth noting that the education of learners who had acquired refugee status, she pointed out, required special treatment if the educational objectives set are to be achieved. She then recounted the problems that many of the refugee learners in Africa underwent including psychological problems and torture.

Coming to her research setting, Kakuma Refugee Camp, she noted that it is composed of a multinational community that provided a home for seven different nationalities from Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Congo as well as over twenty ethnic groups. To facilitate administrative duties like food distribution, health care, security, and education, Dr Choge added, all the refugees from these countries were put in one place. Explaining that educational needs are quite diverse and unique to each refugee group based on the country of origin, Dr Choge noted that COVID-19 also presented new challenges disrupting the education of the refugees as result of the protocols imposed.

In terms of methodology, Dr. Choge's study was primarily a descriptive survey but it was complemented with qualitative data to validate and triangulate the findings. Dr. Choge gave a summary of her research findings as follows:

- Regarding steps taken to improve management of learning, approximately 91 % of the respondents said there were operational rules and regulations set out to discipline errant learners;

- 77% of the respondents agreed that in-service programme for teacher training was being started to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge;
- Close to 73% of the respondents said that the government requested to assist in financial and material support;
- 64% of the respondents agreed that the camp was lasing with the refuges;
- Almost all the respondents said there was no adequate funding on education for displaced learners in conflict zones;
- Regarding whether or not the government of Kenya gives supports to refugee education, responses were quite mixed: while 33% said government 's support is partial, the other 66% expressed disagreement (33% disagreed; while the remaining 33% strongly disagreed).
- Concerning whether or not the environment was conducive to learning in Kakuma Refugee Camp, 33% answered in affirmative while 67% expressed disagreement.

With respect to learners' appraisal test results, Dr. Choge noted that the majority of the learners in class 7 (56%) performed poorly in the appraisal test and that could be attributed to the challenges they went through including psychological instability, trauma, language barrier, inappropriate placement, and inadequate resources. Arguing that all was not lost, she also reported that some students (18%) scored a good grades of 4 (18%). In terms of gender, her study indicated that the boys were the majority and performed better academically than their female counterparts. That could also be attributed, she reasoned, to gender stereotypes associated with women and girls. Another notable finding of her study is the low enrolment of refugee children; her study indicated that although 55% of the refugees in Kakuma are children, over half of the school-age children do not attend school. And factors affecting low school attendance were reported to include child labor, cultural barriers, and lack of resources, family needs, and early marriage .

The other major finding reported by Dr. Choge relates to the questions of, "Whose responsibility is the education of displaced children." To the items on the survey questionnaire on this issue , Dr. Choge's participants' responses are summarized as follows:

- Groups identified as actively participating in the education process include: The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education, religious groups, Non-Governmental organizations, and International communities;

- Challenges encountered in relation to provision of education amidst conflict and forced displacement in Kenya as reported by the research participants included :
 - uncertainty of refugee security and safety arising from the government of Kenya's ultimatum on closure of refugee camps in Kenya;
 - continued conflicts and in-fights among the warring communities;
 - lack of space;
 - lack of accountability on the part of service providers because of lack of policy on who does what;
 - inability to use a language of instruction suitable for all learners of diverse nationalities and backgrounds;
 - maintaining communication and information sharing among the plethora of partners involved in providing education for displaced populations
 - challenges related to using host country teachers or refugee teachers; and
 - using host country teachers or refugee teachers who represent different planning challenges linked with giving compensation and/or incentive schemes, transfer of payments in case of internal displacement of teachers and coordination with external partners, when the host government cannot compensate displaced teachers.

As regards sustainable strategies in the provision and management of education amidst conflict and forced displacement in Kenya, Dr Choge forwarded the following recommendations:

- Development of a refugee education policy to address some of the legal and policy bottlenecks restricting integration of refugees into national education systems;
- Sensitization of relevant agencies on implementation of existing policies, better definition of roles and responsibilities of various bodies involved in education of refugees in Kenya;
- Development of a plan focused on incorporating the education needs of refugees, supplemented by NGOs to help reduce the overload on learners. Strengthening governance and accountability mechanisms in line with frameworks for effective monitoring and evaluation system;
- Establishing clear audit systems;

- Putting in place management of information/communication and a coordination framework that provides an enabling environment for development partners and other stakeholders to participate in education for IDPs and refugees.

Concluding her presentations, Dr. Choge noted that education amidst conflict and forced displacement is an agenda for several of partners. Spearheaded by the host government, she added, it should involve communities, international communities, Non-Governmental Organizations. And she emphasized the need to harmonize these contributions from the many partners through policy frameworks that will help benefit the children and their education moving into the future. On top of that, Dr. Choge underlined the need to mainstream refugees in national education system putting in place an increased number of security officers to curb the frequent conflicts arising in the camp. Equally important is, Dr Choge remarked, mixing together refugees from diverse backgrounds with the intention of making them to stay like members of the same family in order to eliminate in-fighting.

Session Three : Discussions

Following the five presentations, Mr. Alemu, the moderator, opened the floor for discussion and participants gave comments, suggestions and raised several questions. And this part of the report consists of a summary of the discussion including the responses given by panelists. The first question was posed to Dr. Ntege and a participant asked if his study revealed incidents of crimes in cities or crimes committed by young people migrating to rural areas given that they are jobless. Dr Ntege responded that there were some incidents of crimes in urban centers, albeit limited. And he noted that low crime rate was attributable to the presence of tight security including a lot of police and the army. The researcher also added there was an increase in domestic violence due to the lockdown. Because there was lack of food and the youth were out of school (some were even taking drugs to fight their boredoms), there were young people engaged in theft and stealing of food items and property particularly in the villages, Dr. Ntege added. The worst part of it, Dr. Ntege pointed out, was that there were few opportunities to report the crimes because the legal channels were cut due to the curfew and the lockdown.

The second question (in a way a comment) is related to vulnerability of urban refugees. Expressing the danger of lumping all refugees as a vulnerable group reflective of the dominant narrative, a participant asked Ms. Brenda if she really thought all refugees are vulnerable. Ms. Brenda admitted that refugees belong to different clusters and they differ in

many ways depending on their country of origin and their economic status (degree of wealth) and as a result they can't be equally vulnerable. At the same time, she argued that COVID-19 has intensified the vulnerability of all refugees because their self-sufficiency and cash source has been reduced; so, and in that sense, they can be considered as vulnerable, despite varying degree.

The third question was forwarded to Dr Jerome and a participant wanted know if young people migrating to rural areas in mass due to the government's failure to observe the curfew brought all the social evils with them right after at the outbreak of the pandemic. Before directly answering the question, Dr Jeromy gave some background info about the two year lockdowns in Uganda in which the government of Uganda tried to curtail all movements within the city and to rural areas to limit the spread of the disease. When schools closed, young people went out of school and managed to escape out of the city in some cases walking for days. That was not, however, the case in the city because the lockdown restrictions were stricter, said Dr Jeromy, and people were not allowed to move in their compound; they were restricted in their veranda. However, he cautioned that it is wrong to consider all the young people migrating to rural areas as necessarily social evils. On the contrary, he argued, most of them were creative in the rural areas (e.g., some started growing vegetables); they did that because people in rural areas were allowed to look after their cattle and grow vegetables. In spite of that, in their attempt to survive, Dr. Jeromy admitted, the youth from city put a lot of pressure on the land and caused environmental degradation (e.g., by cutting trees to make charcoal).

And Dr. Truphena, Dr. Jeromy's coauthor, gave additional responses to the questions raised saying that the primary objective of their work was to examine the unintended effect of the lockdown on the urban youth. And she explained that the urban youth brought a lot of devastation on the land and the environment by engaging in sand mining, making bricks from swamps, and making charcoal all of which resulted in cutting of trees in some cases all the trees. Even though the dwellers were aware the negative impacts of their deeds on the environment, Dr. Truphena added, they said they were doing those things because they had no other alternatives.

Besides giving additional explanation, Dr. Truphena commented on what was lacking in Dr Choge's and her co-researcher's research work. More specifically, she noted the question "whose agenda is it? ", which is the major topic of their research, is left unanswered. 90%

of the paper dealt with challenges the displaced children face and there was no mention on the question “ whose agenda” the displacement was. . She thus suggested that they remove the subtopic or answer the question they raised properly .

After appreciating Dr Truphena’s critical observation, Dr Choge admitted the issue of who is responsible for the suffering of the refugee children is not adequately addressed and the comment was well taken. She said it became clear from their interviews whose agenda it was in bringing those sufferings to the children (e.g., political interests of some groups, war lords) and she promised they would include that in their revised paper. At the same time, she noted that, that there are a lot of groups involved in the education of the displaced children in the schools and within the community.

Following that, another participant, Dr Eira, asked Dr. Alfrid if he noticed some form of alliance among border pastoralists with competing groups other than facing security problems and challenges resulting from COVID-19 restrictions which his paper dwelt at length. Dr. Eira also wanted to know more about the inner voices of the study respondents which he thought was missing in the presentation. Dr Alfrid responded that there were several forms of alliance among pastoralists in and across DRC and that was expressed in what he calls “cultural contexts” and the details of these alliances are found in his paper. Admitting that he didn’t have the time to present the inner voices of his respondents, he reminded the questioner that the details can be found in the full manuscript.

After responding to the question and the comments , Dr. Alfrid himself posed questions to Dr Jerome. He asked if there were significant differences or similarities in the environmental degradation caused by migrants in the three areas covered by their study. He also asked if youths in these areas were affected by the pandemic differently. Dr Jerome answered that there were considerable differences in those areas and their choices were based on that. He said that their focus in Kampal was in the youth in the upper city and the lower city, particularly those from slums. On the other hand, he added, in Masaka they talked to pastoralists while they targeted participants from greater Gulu. In all these areas, Dr. Jeromy explained, that the environment was affected differently. He, for example, talked about the experience of people who lived in the lake who wanted to fish but refrained from doing so lest they would be beaten by the police; so they resort to cutting trees or find ways of illegally mining sands. And people in other areas were found to have different experiences.

Since there were no more questions, the Chair thanked participants for their lively participation. Finally, in her closing remark, Dr. Mukuna once again thanked all presenters including the participants for their attendance and active participation. She then officially closed the workshop reminding presenters to revise the papers incorporating the comments, suggestion and concerns raised during the workshop and resubmit them for publication in OSSREA research series.. And she notified the researchers that they would receive their honorarium once they finalize the necessary revisions.

The meeting ended at 5:00 pm.